



Department of Justice

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**HEATING AND AIR-CONDITIONING SERVICES COMPANY AND ITS OWNER
PLEAD GUILTY TO BID RIGGING AND FRAUD AT NEW YORK PRESBYTERIAN
HOSPITAL**

WASHINGTON — Mister A.C. Ltd. (Mister A.C.), a Rockville Center, N.Y. heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) services company and its owner pleaded guilty today to conspiring to rig bids on HVAC services provided to New York Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH), the Department of Justice announced today. The owner of the company also pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to defraud NYPH.

Mister A.C. and its owner, Michael Vignola, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Manhattan for rigging bids to NYPH from approximately 2002 until January of 2006. Vignola also pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to defraud NYPH by paying kickbacks to NYPH employees from approximately 2001 until January 2006.

According to the charges, Vignola frustrated NYPH's competitive bid process by conspiring to rig more than \$1 million worth of contracts awarded by NYPH. Vignola also paid more than \$130,000 in kickbacks, to NYPH purchasing officials for their assistance in obtaining work. The kickbacks were given in the form of cash, services, and gifts, such as a jet ski and trailer, a motorcycle, consumer electronics, and free trips.

"The Department of Justice remains vigilant in its efforts to protect competition for American non-profit organizations by prosecuting those who defraud their customers and deprive the public of a competitive bidding process," said Thomas O. Barnett, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division.

The bid-rigging conspiracy that Vignola is charged with carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a \$1 million fine for an individual. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

The fraud conspiracy that Vignola is charged with carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum fine may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

In April 2007, as part of the same investigation, Michael Theodorobeakos and two maintenance and insulation companies he co-owned - Monosis Inc. and STU Associates Inc. - pleaded guilty to conspiring to rig bids on the supply of maintenance and insulation services to NYPH and Mount Sinai Medical Center (Mt. Sinai). As part of that conspiracy, Theodorobeakos and his co-conspirators attempted to create the appearance that NYPH and Mount Sinai were awarding contracts based on competitive bids, when, in fact, they frequently were not.

Today's charges arose from an ongoing federal antitrust investigation of bid rigging, bribery, fraud, and tax offenses relating to contracts administered by the Facilities Operations Department and Engineering Department at NYPH and in the Engineering Department at Mount Sinai. The investigation is being conducted by the Antitrust Division's New York Field Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

Anyone with information concerning bid rigging, bribery, tax offenses, or fraud relating to contracts administered by Facilities Operations Department and Engineering Department at NYPH or in the Engineering Department at Mount Sinai should contact the New York Field Office of the Antitrust Division at 212-264-9308 or the New York Office of the FBI at 212-384-4467.

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